

# *The Historian*

*of Hancock County*

*Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi*

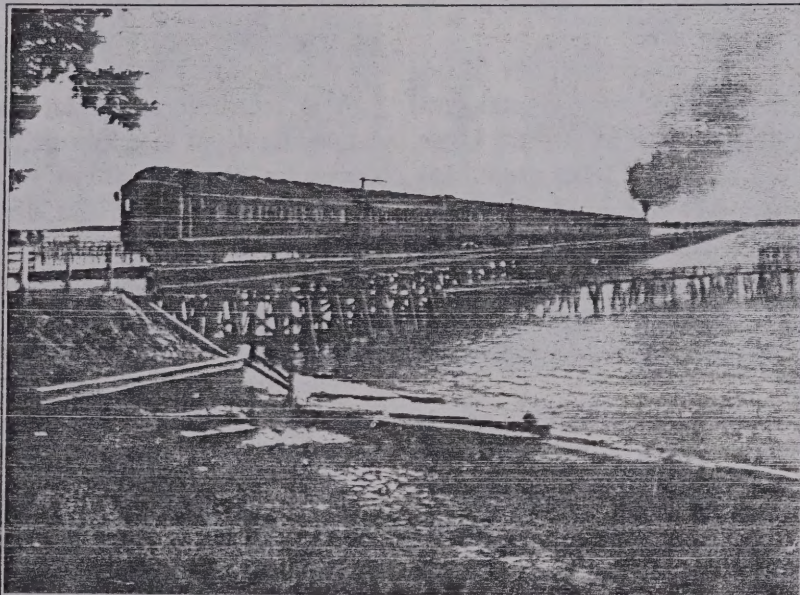
*January 1995*

## **UPDATE ON DEPOT**

Our next luncheon meeting is scheduled for noon on Thursday, January 19 at the Lobrano House, Cue Street, Bay St. Louis. Guest speakers will be architect Kevin Fitzpatrick and Bay St. Louis Community Development Director Buz Olsen, who will bring us up to date on plans for the renovation of the railroad station, its surrounding grounds and walkways. Please call 467-4090 for reservations, at \$5.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As we begin a marvelous new year, let us renew our commitment to improving the Hancock County Historical Society even beyond the incredible level that we have already achieved. Our operation finances are most comfortable, our staff is reasonably (Modesty chose that word) competent and our collection of information has increased dramatically. The only area of short-fall is the building fund which appears to have been somewhat growth-impaired in the last quarter. However, we began 1995 with a nice donation from Leo Seal, Jr. and family and one from Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Davidson. We appreciate these donations and promise to use them wisely. *(Continued on page 2)*



Fast Mail #4, Bay St. Louis, April 1915

## **GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY**

The grand opening of the L.W. Anderson Genealogical Library on January 4 attracted a large crowd of well-wishers as well as potential users eager to trace their ancestry. The library recently moved from William Carey College to Bay St. Louis, a major coup for our city as well as your society which helped convince its director that our town was the best location for this treasure. The new quarters are located on Dunbar Avenue across the street from North Bay Elementary School, and a hop and skip behind Eckerd's Drugstore.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## **1995 FUND RAISER**

Our Board has tentatively set early May for a Tour of Homes that will serve as our major fund raiser for the year. Our tour will coincide with National Tourism Week which begins May 7. More details will be forthcoming, but for now we'd like to hear from those of you who are willing to let us show your homes. This has always been a successful fund-raising event on the Gulf Coast - at least it is easier than another boat show.

If you're interested or want more details, call Patt Cucullu at 467-5262 and let us persuade you.



President, from page 1

One of our great achievements should be obvious to you by now and that is the improved quality of our Newsletter, thanks in large part to our new computer and printer. Please bear with us as we learn to use its myriad capabilities, even if we include some superfluous gimmicks simply because we can.

Another back-patter is getting the L.W. Anderson Genealogical Library moved to Bay St. Louis. It is here! Now let us use it. Ms. Anderson's incredible collection covers the United States and many European countries, so if you haven't met some of your ancestors, it is about time that you did.

Thank you for your support in 1994. We will try and repay your faith by achieving our goals in 1995. Charles H. Gray, President

Genealogy, from page 1

When the old railroad station is renovated, the library will be moved to its second floor. Our January 19 guest speakers will have more details on this. The nationally-acclaimed L.W. Anderson Genealogical Library was founded in 1982 by Anne Anderson and named for her grandmother, Mrs. Vassar (LuLu Williams) Anderson. It began with Anne Anderson's personal collection and grew to today's estimated \$2 million collection. Library hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and Saturday by appointment. A \$2 research fee per person per day is charged for use of library materials.

For more information, call 466-4908.

## OUR FAME SPREADS

*[Note: The Atlanta Journal/The Atlanta Constitution, ran the following article by Rheta Grimsley Johnson in its January 1, 1995 edition. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. E.B.B.]*

Bay St. Louis, Miss. On a whim, I check into riding the train to New Orleans. There was a movement afoot a couple of years ago to refurbish the quaint and crumbling depot here in time for commuter service between Mobile and New Orleans. But from appearances, the movement is stalled. And the trains, well, they are like trains everywhere. Romantic, but never very practical.

"This Property Is Condemned" once was filmed around the stucco depot, and Hollywood didn't have to import ambiance from some West Coast prop room. It's all here - sleepy streets, a graveyard of dead monks, moss-hung oaks. And today, an old woman in a stocking cap waiting by the tracks. "The train's an hour late," she says, "but it'll come." But when, I ask, can you get back? "Midnight tomorrow," she said. Since there's no ticket window, no clerk, I accept her authority. And I drive. That's no chore. A new coffee-table book full of vintage photographs, "Mississippi Observed," quotes writer Elizabeth Spencer: "If I could have one part of the world back the way it used to be, I would not choose Dresden before the fire bombing, Rome before Nero, or London before the blitz. I would not resurrect Babylon, Carthage or San Francisco. Let the leaning tower lean and the hanging gardens hang. I want the Mississippi Gulf Coast back the way it was before

Hurricane Camille." Some of us Johnny-come-latelys would settle for the way it was before the giant casinos. Either way, the west end of the Mississippi Coast remains one of the most compelling and decadently beautiful spots on earth. And yes, I've seen Paris at night and Holland's gladioli fields and Idaho's mountains. The Mississippi Gulf Coast is New Orleans without the murder and parking hassles, Florida without the snowbirds and condos. Yet most of its visitors these days are holed up on neon-lit barges staring with glazed eyes at revolving fruit and dreaming of what will never be. I take old U.S. 90, once the main coast-to-coast artery from Los Angeles to Jacksonville. I-10 has the traffic now and much of the commerce. The old road is used mostly by the people who live along it, people going home. I think of what a retired trucker once said while philosophizing in a bar. Every time he made a haul, he said, he always met someone traveling the opposite direction hauling the very same thing. A metaphor for life, that.

The road bumps through Mississippi pine forests into serious Louisiana swamp. A black bear was hit by a car near here not too long ago. There are signs of what used to be, before the interstate moved life a few miles north. A faded Indian blowing smoke signals is all that's left of The White Kitchen, which once served great oyster poboys. You could play the slots the way they were meant to be played, surreptitiously. You cross the Rigolets, a narrow passage linking the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Pontchartrain - and reach a line of fishing



camps with whimsical names: Don't Back Out, Big Raul's. Used boats are for sale everywhere. Cheap. Big Betty's is doing a brisk early morning bar business. Several David Duke for Governor signs survive. Catholic statuary and Fanny Annies peacefully coexist on yards strewn with fishing gear. The back door to Big Easy is open, even if the hinges are a little rusty.

### TRAIN SPEED RECORD

Almost every railroad has its folklore about the fastest train ever to operate over the line, and the New Orleans and Mobile is no exception. On a summer day in 1916, a special train rolled out of the Canal Street Station just as church bells were pealing the hour of noon. It was a mercy train, with a single passenger aboard its lone coach: Dr. Butterworth, a noted rabies specialist, was being rushed to Montgomery, 318 miles distant, at the request of a banker whose two children were seriously ill with the disease. At the throttle of G-10 class ten-Wheeler No. 252 was Engineer James "Steel Arm" Dickerson. His orders were to make the run to Mobile as quickly as possible, and he did just that, rolling into town at 2:16 p.m. after averaging more than a mile a minute. It was a NO&M speed record, eclipsing the performance of such speedsters as the Barrett Lightning Matinee Special (2 hours, 47 minutes on February 3, 1874). Dickerson made one 5 minute stop at Bay St. Louis for water and oiling and stated that he could have made an even faster trip except the single car did not give him sufficient braking power to slow (or stop),



Excursion Train, Bay St. Louis, 1920s

if necessary, for drawbridges. NO&M's extraordinary efforts were not in vain; Dr. Butterworth was successful in his treatment of the two children. (From "The Railroad that Walks on Water," by J.G. Lachaussee and J. Parker Lamb, in TRAINS, January 1987.)

### 1995 DUES ARE DUE

Since our books are run on a calendar year basis, we count on receiving membership fees at the beginning of a new year. Won't you take a moment to write your check and send it on to us at P.O. Box 312, Bay St. Louis, Ms. 39520? Dues are still only \$12 a year. A great bargain, don't you think?



Visit The  
Anderson Library

### SNOW!!!!

There was a right smart snow storm on Friday, December 23, an event that occurs here very seldom. (Bay St. Louis Gazette, December 31, 1870). [Editor's Note: Remember our two inch blizzard in January 1993?]

### LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

Mon. 8 to 4	Thu. 8 to 4
Tue. 8 to 4	Fri. 2 to 4
Wed. 2 to 4	



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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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OR  
Mail - POST OFFICE BOX 312  
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi 39520

*Hancock County Historical Society*

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